

HOUSE CHAPLAIN PROCESS ENDS

Rev. Charles Wright has withdrawn his name from consideration as the next House Chaplain and House Speaker Dennis Hastert has appointed Father Daniel P. Coughlin as House Chaplain. Father Coughlin is Vicar for Priests of the Archdiocese of Chicago.

Catholic League President William Donohue released the following statement today:

“The Catholic League is pleased to note that the House Chaplain selection process has come to an end. Over the past few months, we issued 14 new releases on this subject and granted scores of interviews to the media. We raised many serious questions about the treatment of Father Timothy O’Brien in the selection process and were dismayed by the way the Republicans handled this matter. But we have no interest in fighting this fight any longer and we commend House Speaker Dennis Hastert for bringing this chapter to an end.

“All along we have said that our only interest has been in assuring that the selection process be given strict scrutiny by Republicans and Democrats alike. We have never had any interest in the outcome, only the process. With this said, the Catholic League commends Rev. Wright for stepping aside and Father Coughlin for his appointment as the first Catholic to ever hold the post of House Chaplain.”

BRYANT GUMBEL’S PROBLEM WITH

CATHOLICISM

Yesterday's edition of the CBS program, "The Early Show," featured another attack on Catholicism; it's the third outburst in less than two months. Joining Bryant Gumbel in this attack was his co-host Jane Clayson, anchor Julie Chen and meteorologist Mark McEwen. Here is a sample of the extended discussion:

McEwen: Do you go to church?

Gumbel: No.

McEwen: Then why do you give up stuff for Lent?

Gumbel: Because I think there is a great deal of Catholic guilt that remains.

McEwen: That's what—that's what drives the Catholic Church, is guilt.

Gumbel: I mean, so if you even—if you even think about Betty Sue in the backseat, forget about doing it. Save your effort. You already sinned.

Chen: I haven't thought of Betty Sue in the backseat...

McEwen: ...if you do go to the backseat, you can go say you're sorry.

Gumbel: That's right.

McEwen: It's called confession.

Gumbel: ...were, like no matter what you did, if you had a double murder, he'd give you, like, a Hail Mary.

McEwen: That's right.

Gumbel: Say a Hail Mary and go home. And the other one, if

you, like, ate meat on Friday, he'd make you take a trip to Lourdes. Seriously. I mean, no—the penance was different...

Catholic League president William Donohue commented as follows:

“I mean, like, hey man, like, when will Bryant grow up?”

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VS.

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“60 MINUTES” JOINS EFFORT TO DISCREDIT PIUS XII

Last night the CBS show, “60 Minutes,” did a segment on the Vatican’s response to the Holocaust. Catholic League president William Donohue replied today with the following comments:

“To trot out John Cornwell to make the case that Pius XII was ‘Hitler’s Pope’ is consistent with the way ‘60 Minutes’ views Catholicism. Cornwell was introduced as a ‘practicing Catholic’ who was granted ‘unprecedented access’ to the Vatican’s archive. This is wrong on both counts. In 1991, Cornwell wrote how he has become ‘increasingly convinced that human beings were morally, psychologically, and materially better off without a belief in God.’ He added, ‘As I entered middle age nothing short of a miracle could have shaken these firm convictions.’ So why didn’t Ed Bradley ask him about this? Or would that have gotten in the way of his agenda?

“As for the ‘unprecedented access’ bit, this is nonsense: Vatican records show that many persons have had access to this archive; they also show that Cornwell accessed the archive for about 3 weeks and often for short periods of time, not exactly the stuff of major research.

“Cornwell says it was one particular comment by Pius XII that convinced him that the pope was no different from Hitler in how he viewed Jews. But the quote Cornwell refers to— a Jew with ‘pale, dirty, with drugged eyes’—is a remark that the pope made about one particular Bolshevik; it was not a sweeping generalization about Jews.

“Finally, the show makes much of those Jews who were killed in Italy, the pope’s backyard. This is astounding given that nowhere in all of Europe did more Jews survive—fully 85 percent—than in Italy. Indeed, if it weren’t for the pope,

860,000 more Jews would have died at the hands of the Nazis. Is there any person who saved more Jews than that?"

BOB JONES JUST CAN'T GIVE IT UP

Yesterday, the Catholic League issued a news release saying that the decision by Bob Jones University to drop its labeling of Catholicism and Mormonism as a cult didn't go far enough: we called attention to the anti-Catholic remarks still posted on the school's website. But now president Bob Jones III has issued a statement clarifying what happened. He said yesterday that it was "totally misleading" to conclude that the removal of the cult charge was done "for suspect reasons or because of embarrassment or cowardice."

The cult charge was taken down temporarily, Jones said, to provide space on the school's website for a new message. AP quotes him as saying, "In order to leave no doubt in anyone's mind of the university's integrity and absolute commitment to its biblical principles, the article in question has been reposted."

Catholic League president William Donohue took note of this development:

"In order to leave no doubt in anyone's mind of the Catholic League's integrity and absolute commitment to its Catholic principles, our previous accusation that Bob Jones University is anti-Catholic has been reaffirmed by the president's latest decision."

SLATE JUSTIFIES ANTI-CATHOLICISM

Slate.com, the online magazine, recently published a piece that justified anti-Catholicism. In reply to an article by Andrew Sullivan in the *New York Times Magazine* on March 12, Jack Shafer of *Slate* wrote a piece the same day on anti-Catholicism. "If anti-Catholic bigotry exists in America, it might have something to do with the Catholic Church's past conduct. Just this weekend, His Holiness John Paul II conceded as much when he finally got around to apologizing to the world for 2000 years of Catholic wickedness."

Shafer also compared the pope to Louis Farrakhan: "But tap-dancing away from accountability more beautifully than Farrakhan, the pope absolved the Catholic Church of blame because it is 'holy and immaculate.'"

Catholic League president William Donohue addressed this issue today:

"Shafer is not alone in using the pope's apology as a club to beat up on the Catholic Church, but he is the most brazen. His position is that anti-Catholicism is a function of Catholic wickedness.

"Some blacks today feel it is okay to be anti-Semitic given the past wickedness they experienced at the hands of Jews. Some heterosexuals justify their gay bashing by citing the wicked results of gay sex. Some Jews think it is okay to be anti-Catholic because they want to get even with Catholics for not doing enough to stop Hitler. Some Catholics are anti-Semitic, anti-gay and anti-black—for equally irresponsible reasons. But the difference is that the only bigotry that will

be promoted by well-educated people in influential outlets is anti-Catholicism.

“When the movie *Dogma* came out, *Slate* writer David Edelstein took great delight in describing how outrageously irreverent it was towards Catholicism. Now Shafer takes delight in justifying anti-Catholicism. It would be good to hear from the editor, Michael Kinsley, about this.”

BOB JONES MAKES CHANGES, BUT NOT ENOUGH

On March 3, Bob Jones III told Larry King that he was dropping the school's ban on interracial dating. Now yesterday the school announced that it has dropped from its website the statement that called Catholicism and Mormonism a “cult.” But it still posts other disparaging comments on Catholicism. See www.bju.edu for more information, especially the Resources page article by Bob Jones Jr., “Romanism and the Charismatic Movement.”

William Donohue, president of the Catholic League, had this to say:

“I am so happy that my religion is no longer seen as a cult in the eyes of Bob Jones University. Just think how delighted I will be once I learn that the school no longer brands my religion ‘a satanic counterfeit, an ecclesiastic tyranny’ and ‘the Mother of Harlots.’”

MEDIA GO MUTE ON MONTREAL FASCISM

There has not been one report in the United States regarding an incredible church desecration that took place on March 7 in Montreal. And only one newspaper in Canada, the nation's newest national daily, the *National Post*, has editorialized on the subject. Here are the facts as reported in the *National Post* and the *Montreal Gazette*.

On March 7, 15 people wearing ski masks spray-painted graffiti with the words "Religion—A Trap for Fools" on a pillar outside Mary Queen of the World Cathedral in downtown Montreal. Inside, they painted "No God, no masters" on one of the altars. They overturned flowerpots and stuck sanitary napkins—some soiled—to pictures and walls. Condoms were thrown around the cathedral, the missal was stolen and hundreds of hymn and prayer books were destroyed. There was an attempt to overthrow the tabernacle as well.

The group, Collectif Autonome Féministe, was celebrating International Women's Day in Montreal, and when they barged into the church they cursed religion and said they were claiming the right to abortion and freedom of speech. In a written statement, they denounced the Catholic Church's teachings on abortion, homosexuality and sex education. They were not charged with a hate crime because the authorities concluded that there wasn't enough evidence to make the charge stick.

Catholic League president William Donohue commented as follows:

"Not one U.S. newspaper has reported on the outbreak of fascism in Montreal, though the *New York Times* did run a story yesterday on the controversy in Quebec over whether Pokemon

cards should be issued in French. AP ran a story on March 8, 1999, on a synagogue that was vandalized in Siberia, but has said nothing about the March 7, 2000 desecration of the Montreal church. But AP did address another issue in Montreal yesterday: the story was entitled 'U.S. Files Complaint against European Union on Jet Mufflers.'

"In Montreal at least, the barbarians are no longer at the gate—they've penetrated. Worse, no one seems to care."

FLORIDA VOUCHER DECISION ISN'T THE LAST WORD

A state judge today declared the Florida school voucher program unconstitutional. In doing so, the judge put a halt to the first statewide voucher program. The program, put forth by Governor Jeb Bush, was targeted at Florida's worst schools and allowed parents a voucher of up to \$3,389 to send their children to the school of their choice; parochial schools were included.

William Donohue, president of the Catholic League, issued the following remarks today:

"What happened today in Florida is not the last word on school vouchers. This issue will eventually be settled in the U.S. Supreme Court, and a decision can't come too soon.

"The ironies are macabre: those who champion the rights of the poor are pro-choice on abortion but anti-choice on education. That's because they are so concerned over the fate of unwanted children that they'd rather see them dead than alive. This is called the humanitarian thing to do.

“Those that live, however, are not entitled to go to quality schools and must be forced to attend schools that breed poverty and ignorance. Then the cycle begins all over again. This is called the humanitarian thing to do. Anyone for inhumanity?”

GEPHARDT OFFERS HISTORY OF HOUSE CHAPLAIN PROCESS

In a March 8 letter to House Speaker Dennis Hastert, House Minority Leader Dick Gephardt recounts how the House Chaplain issue unfolded. In doing so, he provides an important service: it is now possible to match what Gephardt has said about the process with statements from Hastert and House Majority Leader Dick Armey.

Catholic League president William Donohue comments on this development:

“According to Gephardt, before the House Chaplain process began, Hastert and Armey were advised of the ‘importance of a consensus candidate.’ He stresses that after the names of the three candidates were put forward, the co-chairmen of the selection committee, Rep. Bliley and Rep. Pomeroy, briefed the three of them; then Gephardt met with the Democratic members of the selection committee. It is significant what he said next: ‘At this point there was no doubt that, while the formal transmittal letter did not rank the three candidates, the clear choice of a bipartisan majority of the selection panel, including its Chairman and Ranking Democratic Member, was Father O’Brien.’ This is exactly what the Catholic League has been saying all along—it was well-known that O’Brien was the

top choice.

“Gephardt says that while he could have supported any of the three candidates, he ‘felt no hesitation whatsoever in concluding that I could support the candidate preferred by the selection committee.’ Then he met with Hastert and Armey and they told him they wanted Rev. Charles Wright. At that point, Gephardt told the nine Democratic members of the panel of the Wright selection and then reported back to Hastert and Armey ‘their perplexed reaction,’ adding that Wright was not a consensus candidate, but that O’Brien or Rev. Robert Dvorak were. A few days later Wright was chosen.

“If Gephardt’s account is erroneous, Hastert and Armey should publicly challenge him. If it’s accurate, they have some explaining to do.”

BIGOTED RHETORIC TARS **“ABORTION PROVIDER DAY”**

Tomorrow, pro-abortion groups around the country will celebrate a “National Day of Appreciation for Abortion Providers.” The day was organized by a radical group called Refuse and Resist! In its website, the organizing group speaks of a “Christian fascist, fundamentalist morality” that has allegedly overtaken the country. It also talks of the “Christian fascists” who are waging war on women and abortion clinics. Joining the coalition are organizations ranging from the ACLU to Catholics for a Free Choice, an anti-Catholic front group sponsored in large part by the Ford Foundation.

William Donohue, president of the Catholic League, offered the following remarks today:

“Abortion is a human tragedy, not an event to celebrate. That the pro-abortion industry thinks otherwise is evident in its support for a ‘National Day of Appreciation for Abortion Providers.’ Moreover, to label Christians who oppose abortion as being fascists is to inflame passions and sponsor bigotry. Surely there are those who support abortion as birth control who find such language reprehensible. It is important that they speak up lest we Christians think that Refuse and Resist! speaks for all of them.”